

SPI-1 Downtown Special Public Interest District
Fact Sheet
Z-07-38

This ordinance is an outgrowth of the work of a collaborative stakeholder committee process begun in April 2002 to review and update the zoning regulations for Downtown. Stakeholder members included property owners, business owners and residents in collaboration with Central Atlanta Progress and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning, with assistance provided by hired consultants from Urban Collage, Inc. and Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh. The process came to be known as the Downtown Livability Code. During this process, the Imagine Downtown Vision Plan was also completed with recommendations to guide the future development of Downtown. The proposed SPI-1 regulations are intended to implement the recommendations of this study adopted by the Atlanta City Council in April 2006.

The following summary provides an overview of the proposed SPI-1 regulation update as introduced by City Council legislation 07-O-0514.

Overall Intent of the Proposed Updates to SPI-1

- Implement the Imagine Downtown vision plan adopted by City Council in April 2006
- Update the SPI-1 zoning text to apply more effective zoning techniques that have been developed and tested to encourage urban, mixed-use development
- Create a vibrant 24-hour Downtown environment where people can live, work, meet, and play
- Provide development standards for the street environment to enhance the public realm and encourage pedestrian activity throughout Downtown
- Simplify the format of the SPI-1 code to create a more user friendly ordinance that is clear and easy to use and understand

The Big Picture of the Proposed Updates to SPI-1

- Entirely new text for the SPI-1 zoning regulations
- Properties currently zoned SPI-1 will remain zoned SPI-1 and be subject to updated regulations
- All properties currently zoned SPI-2 and SPI-13 will be re-zoned to SPI-1 and be subject to the updated regulations
- Some properties within Downtown currently zoned C-4 and C-5 will be re-zoned to SPI-1 and be subject to updated regulations.
- Subareas have been created to protect unique characteristics of smaller areas within the district

What is Proposed?

- Update use regulations to limit uses determined incompatible with the future vision for Downtown
- Generally maintain existing commercial Floor Area Ratio (FAR) permission and increase FARs for residential uses.
- Reserve the opportunity to provide a workforce housing density bonus to be consistent with city-wide Inclusionary Zoning initiative

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- Standardize sidewalk requirements throughout district with an emphasis on required elements of sidewalks (i.e. minimum widths, materials, street trees and lighting)
- Provide regulations for Supplemental Zones (in certain areas) to enrich the sidewalk experience by encouraging outdoor dining and merchandise displays.
- Add regulations that govern the relationship between buildings and sidewalks and streets – i.e. active ground-floor uses and storefront windows are required and blank walls are limited
- Identify Storefront Streets to create primary pedestrian streets with street-level retail and other pedestrian amenities i.e. shopping streets
- Provide additional screening requirements for loading areas, docks and mechanical accessory features
- Regulate curb cuts to balance the comfort and needs of pedestrians with those of automobiles
- Provide design requirements for parking structures to have the appearance of a horizontal storied building, be architecturally cohesive with the surrounding block faces and building uses and conceal automobiles and lighting
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements (particularly for residential uses), provide maximum space totals for all uses, reduce off-street loading requirements, expand bicycle and moped parking space requirements
- Include regulations that support Transportation Demand Management activities
- Protect historic resources particularly in Fairlie-Poplar and the Terminus/Hotel Row area
- Provide illustrative drawings for clarity and to enhance understanding
- Expand the Centennial Olympic Park Development Review Committee (DRC) review area to include project reviews within the entire SPI-1 district. This advisory group shall provide the Bureau of Planning formal comments on special administrative permit (SAP) applications within the district.